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CHAPTER V

THE FIRST CHRONICLE

(Translated from the Chinese with the aid of the Na-khi manuscripts and sorcerers)

1. THE DESCENT OF MAN

173 The first two pages after the introduction deal with entirely legendary ancestors who are mentioned in the Na-khi pictographic manuscripts used in their various ceremonies. Those in which the names of the ancestors occur belong to the *Muan-bpo* (Worshipping Heaven) and to the *Ssu Jsu* (Marriage) ceremonies. One ancestor, Tsu-dgyu Dgyu-dze by name, who appears in the genealogy, is, however, always missing in these manuscripts which jump immediately from Tsu-yu Tsu-dgyu to Dgyu-dze Dzi-dze.

It was the custom to place the father's name in front of the son's, hence the apparent double name.

The names of the wives of these legendary ancestors are not always the same — with the exception of one or two, as in the case of the important, what might be called post-flood ancestor, Tso-dze Llü-ghügh, about whom there exist a number of stories.

The title of the chronicle reads: *Yü-lung shan ling-chio Yang po-na* 玉龍山靈腳楊伯那 (The residence of Yang at the divine foot of the Jade dragon Mountain).

The sub-title reads: *Mu-shih hsien tzu-sun ta-tzu huan-p'u* 木氏賢子孫大族宗譜 (Official Chronicle of the great clan, worthy sons and grandsons of the Mu family).

Now follow 11 sentences of five characters each, which if translated literally would make no sense. As already remarked, these are Na-khi sentences partly translated into Chinese, while some of the characters must be read as phonetic transcriptions of Na-khi words.

These sentences, although not in the same sequence, appear in the pictographic manuscript, *Ts'o-mbĕr ssaw*, which literally means "To invite the Ancestors." *Ts'o* stands for Ts'o-dze Llü-ghügh, but *ts'o* also means man, *mbĕr* the descent, and *ssaw* to invite, so the title can be translated as "Inviting the descendants or generations of Ts'o-dze Llü-ghügh." The book really gives the descent of man. It is chanted when the Na-khi propitiate Heaven in the first moon.

●173 173 764 It would appear that the Descent of man (*Ts'o-mbĕr ssaw*), or the Creation of man as it might also be called, was in ancient time recited by men in the form of question and answer, during the propitiation of Heaven ceremony. There are many such songs and some of them are impromptu. For example, it is the custom on the eve of the funeral of an old man, for his relatives to gather in the village square around a huge log fire, and there recite the deeds of the deceased. The men form a circle holding hands much like children do when at play. The leader at the beginning of the recitation takes a step for-

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ward and then one backward, while all the rest in the ring will follow suit. The leader then would chant a question which would be answered by someone in the ring blessed with a good voice. The song is apt to begin with: "Where did the wealthy Tibetan die?" The answer would be: "He died within the earth house!" "What clothes will he be dressed in?" "In a *p'u-lu* [woollen] garment he will be dressed!" — etc.

The sentences which here follow are undoubtedly those of a song once sung in the Muan-bpö d'a, or place especially set aside for the propitiation of Heaven, and during its performance. The actual word "Who" initiating the question is omitted in these sentences. But we can readily see that each sentence is divided into question and answer. The first sentence should therefore be translated thus: "Who laid man's egg?" "Heaven laid it!" Second sentence: "Who hatched man's egg?" "Earth hatched it!" Third sentence: "What was the egg of Ts'o-zä like?" "It was like the conch-shell!" — and so forth.

First sentence. — The sentence in Chinese is as follows: 勾古天能古 *Ts'ao-ku-t'ien-neng-ku* This translated literally would be: "Grass old heaven able old," which, of course, would have no meaning. It must be read in Na-khi: *Ts'o-gv-muan nnu-ghv*. It can readily be seen that the Chinese characters *Ts'ao-ku* stand for *Ts'o-gv*, the third character *t'ien* (heaven) is a translation of the Na-khi *muan*, which means heaven, there being no such sound as *muan* in Chinese. The character *neng* is the nearest approach to the Na-khi *nnu*, and the last character *ku* is here read in Na-khi *ghv*. The literal translation of the sentence is: "Man egg heaven it laid." This same sentence written in pictographs appears in the book called *Ts'o-mbbv ssaw* (Plate 10) thus:

The uppermost symbol represents the vault of heaven (read *muan*), below it is the head of an elephant (read *ts'o*), below the trunk of the elephant the symbol *gv* for egg, and the last conventional sign for head is read *ghv*. Abstract ideas cannot be written with pictographs, therefore symbols representing concrete ideas are employed or borrowed, which have the same tone value and sound complex as the abstract word which is to be conveyed. The word *nnu* is not written. In Na-khi an elephant is called *ts'o*, and when the name of Ts'o-dze Llü-ghugh is written, either an elephant's head is used, or the figure of a man with an elephant's head. On the top of the elephant head is however the Na-khi no-bu = pearl, (Tibetan nor-bû), which would actually indicate that Ts'o-dze Llü-ghugh is meant as the father of the Na-khi race was also the father of the Nāga or Serpent spirits who stole the pearl from the Lake Muan-llü-ndaw-gyi (Ḳhu). *See*: Note 1, of p. 82. By stating that the egg whence man originated was laid by Heaven, the Na-khi mean to indicate that man's fate was decreed by Heaven and that he is thus identified with Heaven.

Second sentence. — 勾佛堆能佛 *Ts'ao-feng-ti-neng-feng*; in Na-khi: *Ts'o-bbu-dü-nnü-bbu*. The second character *feng* is ill-selected. It should be 男 *fu*, which would be nearest to the Na-khi *bbu* and would also express the Na-khi

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Mo-so Kingdom was called Hua-ma Kuo. The Chü-tien River has its source west of it, on the south-eastern slopes of Li-ti-p'ing and in Han-sou Mountain 漢叟山. The Li-chiang records state that Hua-ma Shan is 350 li from Li-chiang. This must be an error, or perhaps the extreme northern end is meant, and this would indicate that the mountain extends to T'a-ch'eng, which is 350 li from Li-chiang. On the Chinese military map the mountain is marked from south of Shih-men Kuan to San-kai-tzu 三街子 (this should read Shang-ko-tzu 上格子).

Beyond Hung-shih-ngai canyon the river widens and makes a large sweeping curve on the west bank. The mountains look bleak and dreary and are grass-covered only. Immediately beyond the cliff, and beneath the vertical sandstone wall on the north side, is a nice little temple which belongs to the hamlet of Ssaw-ssaw-gku — in Chinese the name is transcribed Shan-hsien-ku 仙姑 (H-M., Sansankou) — only one li distant. Willow trees and large, spreading Albizzias line the bank of the Yangtze, while long, sandy or rock-strewn islets are visible everywhere in the river-bed (October).

The trail, now muddy, leads between rice-fields for about ten li to the Na-khi hamlet of Aw-gkv-dzhi. Wide valleys open out into the main gorge. We enter beautiful groves of *Castanopsis Delavayi* and oaks, beyond which we reach the hamlet of Shŏ-dzo (Shang-ko-tzu or Upper Ko-tzu), while further down is the hamlet of Hsia-ko-tzu (Lower Ko-tzu). As already remarked, the Chinese map gives the village wrongly as San-kai-tzu 三街子 (H-M., Sangaidsi), but the Li-chiang records give it as I wrote it down on the spot. The village is situated on the floor of a broad lateral valley carrying a fairly large stream called the Sung-chiang Ho 宋江河, which is crossed by a covered wooden bridge. Opposite on the east bank, in Chung-tien territory, is the hamlet of Nda-lä.

A legend is connected with the cliff at Nda-lä, which is known as Bä-mä-'a. It is the story of a girl who was given in marriage. When she left her home she looked back, and was carried off by the clouds and winds to Bä-mä-'a. She was hence known as Nda-lä-a-ssaw-mi, which means the girl (whose soul) was scattered or blown by the wind to Nda-lä. A whole book is devoted to the seven wind spirits of which she is one. It is chanted during the Hăr-la-llü k'ö ceremony in propitiation of these wind spirits, who are believed to liberate the dogs of the clouds and wind, and bombard the houses of the people with stones, and close up the water-courses.

Beyond the hamlet the hill-sides are pine-covered, and the river-bed narrow and of considerable depth. Near here the river makes a rather sharp curve to the west, due to a broad peninsula which extends deeply into its bed (PLATE 154). The vegetation is of a scrub-xerophytic type and consists mainly of Pyracantha bushes, Escholtzia, Prinsepia, Ligustrum, while blue-flowered Didissandra cling to the rock walls. The trail skirts the mountain-side which it also ascends, and here we encounter Castanopsis, *Cornus capitata*, Excoecaria, etc. Descending again to the plain we pass the hamlet of Dsi-gku (Tz'u-k'ai 茨開)[23] situated near the river bank. The Chinese

[23] In the Li-chiang records it is written Tz'u-k'o 茨科, which is the better transcription of the Na-khi name of the place.

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This tribe lives on both banks of the Gold River between my Romi Tschanggu and Wa se kou, the place where the Ta tsien lu River flows into the /218/ Kin tschuan - Tung ho which the Ta tsien lu Tibetans there call rDyarong mutschü. The Yü tung people (Tibetan: Godong) are under the rule of their own hereditary prince and speak a language that neither Chinese nor Tibetans nor people from Kin tschuan understand, and that is supposed to have similarity only with the language of Bawang, the next kingdom above Romi Tschanggu. The inhabitants are farmers and are probably already related to the Lolo of Ning yüan fu, whose language, however, has a certain relationship with Tibetan. Each year in the eleventh Chinese month they celebrate a large folk festival during which they light fires on all the mountains, amid great shouting. The festival is supposed to free the country from a dreadful snake god. In former times - so the natives tell - there lived a large snake among them in a cave, to which each year a human being had to be offered as sacrifice. Each family in turn was obliged to throw one of its members to the snake. Once fate struck a smith, but he tossed a large piece of white-hot iron into the cave. The snake snapped at it, devoured it and burned up miserably. Its petrified image is still shown near the river. The neighbors of the Godong are amazed at the strange way in which these people carry burdens. Even loads up to 100 pounds that are meant to be carried on one's back they carry fastened to a band on their forehead.

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On the left bank of the Tung River toward the south are the territories of the Leng pien and beyond that of the Schen pien tu se. However, today these are almost completely swallowed up by the great flood of Chinese.

/218/ On June 13, I attempted to follow the Great Gold River upstream, but was deterred because of all-too precipitous places, in view of my unskillful horses of the steppes, and decided to get to the next mandarin city of Mu gung ting by way of the so-called da lu, the main highway and military road. The journey thither was supposed to take only three days. From Mu gung ting a road that was not dangerous was said to lead over the mountains to the upper part of the Gold River. However, already the crossing of the suspension

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